Evaluation of Montana's Residential Methamphetamine Treatment
Programs

Elkhorn Treatment Center for Women
Nexus Treatment Center for Men

Timothy B. Conley, Ph.D., LCSW, CAS
Kimberly Spurzem
Research & Survey Consulting
Florence, Montana 59833

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the second report analyzing outcomes from the Nexus and Elkhorn methamphetamine treatment programs in Montana; it follows work by Conley (2008). This report uses information collected by the Department of Corrections and the programs and includes all discharges from their start in June of 2007 through February of 2010. The report thoroughly describes the treatment population and statistically identifies specific risk factors associated with program non-completion and offender return rate.

Both this and the previous work fulfill the goals set forth in the legislature's original request for treatment proposals that "the contractor shall provide both quantitative and qualitative measures of the program's performance by generate(ing) management reports that accurately track these measures." Specifically this report addresses "…efforts to decrease the proportion of offenders who violate probation, as evidenced by a lower number of intermediate sanctions and revocations" and "to decrease the incidence of further drug-related convictions."

At this point in time, none of the 299 offenders included in this study, who completed either program since their start in June 2007 have been convicted of another drug related offense.

Each program has significantly increased participant completion rates despite substantially more referrals of high risk offenders directly from prison. At Nexus, 78.4% of offenders completed the program; this is an 11% increase over the completion rate from the previous report. At Elkhorn, 88.2% of offenders successfully completed the program; this is a 6% improvement over the last report. Across both programs, 82% of offenders completed 9 months of treatment and only 18% were discharged prior to completing. This is a significant increase over the previously documented 71% completion rate, and reflects an increasing level of competence at providing treatment services to a very challenging treatment population.

Services at the programs have continued to adapt to more effectively address the 41.8% of men and 85.6% of women who have a co-occurring mental illness; the 60.4% of women reporting a history of childhood abuse or neglect; the 76.4% of female offenders who were victims of domestic violence; the 38.4% of men physically abused/neglected as children; and the 24.7% of men that were sexually abused as children – all of whom were chemically dependent.

At highest risk for program non-completion are those who are younger, have *fewer felonies*, are mentally ill and (if male) have Attention Deficit Disorder. The Conley (2008) study had identified prescribed psychiatric medication and a history of hospitalization as risk factors for non-completion, but as the programs have matured in their ability to address mental illness issues, these are no longer statistically significant predictors of non-completion.

All who completed the treatment programs were referred to prerelease or other community corrections settings; 82.6% completed those programs. The previous report was unable to comment on this as, at that time, nearly all offenders were still in prerelease. Currently, in those community corrections settings, offenders at highest risk for return were younger (mean age 34 compared to 38), had spent more time in prison previously (6 ½ years compared to 4), and were not ethnically Native American. In fact the return rate from prerelease centers and other

community settings for Native Americans is 7.3%, compared to 21.5% for non-Native Americans.

This last statistic, that Native Americans are being revoked for violations and returned to other programs at 1/3 the rate of their non-Native counterparts is noteworthy, especially in light of earlier findings from Conley and Schantz (2006) that across Montana prerelease centers in 2005-2006, Native Americans were 2.4 times *more* likely to be revoked. Initiatives by the Department of Corrections to address this disparity are apparently paying off, at least for prerelease participants referred by the methamphetamine treatment programs. It may be that offenders who were going to violate their terms of parole/probation and be returned to a different level of service did so while still in the treatment programs. Nonetheless, there is no significant disparity in completion rates across ethnicities in the treatment programs themselves.

Only three offenders who completed the treatment programs were returned to prison (from either the programs or PRCs) and only one of those for committing a new crime. Technically speaking, the recidivism rate (from prison, back to prison) is non-occurring at this time. Regarding crimes, only one of the 36.5% of offenders who failed to complete placement, either at the treatment program or community corrections level, was charged with a new crime; all the rest were for technical violations of parole/probation terms.

Both programs have successfully improved the completion rate. It is likely that this trend will continue as adjustments and population management strategies adapt to changes in participant profile. A similar improvement at the prerelease center and community corrections level is possible as these programs mature in their ability to rehabilitate this sub-group of offenders. The Department is advised to continue to gather and centralize as much information on these offenders as possible, in order to identify those at highest risk and to deliver maximally effective programs. Ensuring accurate data collection beyond program exit is crucial for the development of fiscally and politically satisfactory answers to key questions.

INTRODUCTION

The Montana Department of Corrections (DOC), in collaboration with Community Counseling and Correctional Services and Boyd Andrew Community Services, contracted with Research & Survey Consulting (RSC) for program evaluation outcome research to assess the efficacy of the Nexus and Elkhorn methamphetamine treatment programs. The ultimate goal was to establish efficient data collection and reporting methods that would enable ongoing data collection for verifying and improving program effectiveness, including the prediction of program non-completion, offender return rate, and recidivism. The first report was published in September of 2008.

Non-completion is defined as the rate at which adult offenders exit the programs for any reason other than completion. Return rate is defined as the rate at which adult offenders enter or return to an adult community correctional facility or prison in Montana following completion of the Nexus or Elkhorn treatment programs. Return rate, as used here, means movement to another setting after violating terms and failing to complete participation in prerelease. Recidivism is defined as the rate at which adult offenders return to prison in Montana for any reason within three years of release from prison.

Program evaluation methods utilizing secondary analysis of file data as well as survey research were used for this study. The primary strategy was for program staff to collect data from offender records and files. No information was sought which would not normally be in a client record; this was not experimental research and there were no interventions devised for the study. Information concerning variables in offenders' lives is stored electronically and in paper form at both programs and data from these sources was selected for study purposes. The data ultimately provided to RSC by the Elkhorn program was in the form of paper client surveys, which were then hand-entered into Statistical package for the Social Sciences, a research software program. The Nexus program generated and provided additional variables beyond what was initially requested. Key variables concerning offender movement were provided by Mark Johnson of DOC as Excel spreadsheets which were then converted into the main SPSS file. All data was rendered compatible through extensive re-coding and data reconciliation processes. A normal process of re-coding, labeling and transforming the data was necessary to render it amenable to statistical analysis. Ultimately this yielded an information-rich and useful data set.

Aggregated data from both programs was analyzed for frequency distributions of information; in many instances it proved more informative to analyze the programs separately. Statistical models were generated to identify risk factors predicting program non-completion and offender return rates.
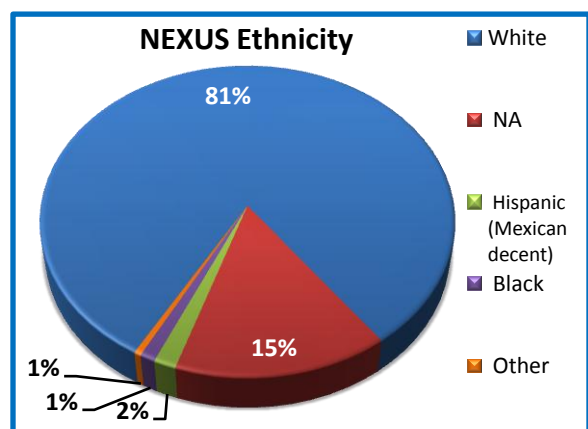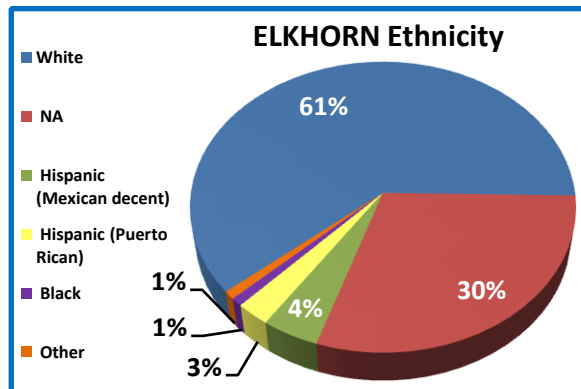
DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

Referrals: 185 discharged offenders from the Nexus site were available for analysis. The majority, 58.7% of male offenders, were referred from Montana State Prison. This is an increase from last year's 48%. 19% were referred to Nexus from MASC, 14.1% from START, and 7.6% from Department of Correction commitments. There were 114 discharged offenders from the Elkhorn site included in analysis. 86% of female offenders came from either Montana Women's Prison (30.7%), or Passages (55.3%). The remaining 14% came from other Department of Corrections programs.
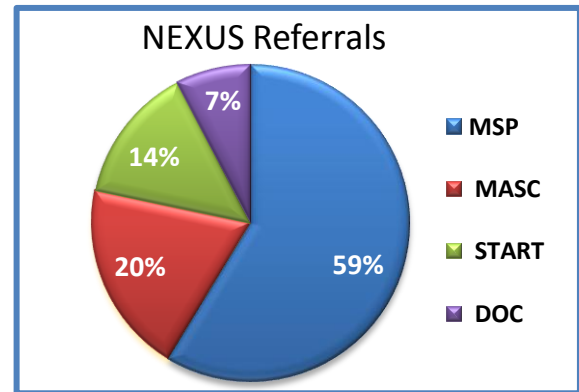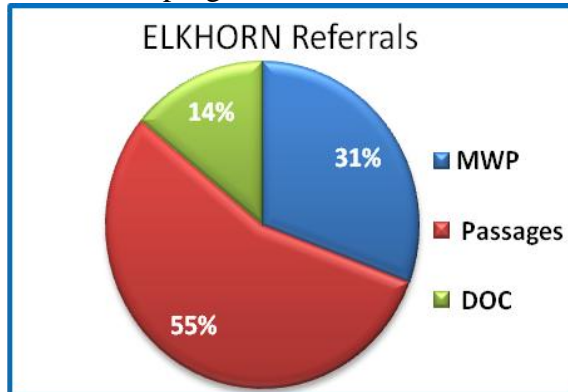
Prison time, lifetime felonies, misdemeanors and arrests: 87.8% of all offenders spent some time in prison prior to Nexus or Elkhorn; of these, the average time served in prison was 55 months (approximately 4.5 years). The average number of lifetime felonies for male offenders is 5.2; misdemeanors 16.9; and arrests 20.1. For female offenders, the average number of lifetime felonies, misdemeanors and arrests is 3.7, 8.3 and 12.1 respectively. These values all show a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between men and women, with men more criminally involved.

Age and Ethnicity: The average age of all offenders is 36.8, but 50% are under 35 years old. 81.4% of Nexus offenders are white, 15.3% are Native American/American Indian, 1.6% are Hispanic from Mexican descent, 1.1% are Black and 0.5% identified as other. 61.4% of Elkhorn offenders are white, 29.8% are Native American/American Indian, 2.6% are Hispanic of Mexican descent, 0.9% are Hispanic of Puerto-Rican descent, 0.9% are Black and the remaining 4.4% identify as mixed or other.
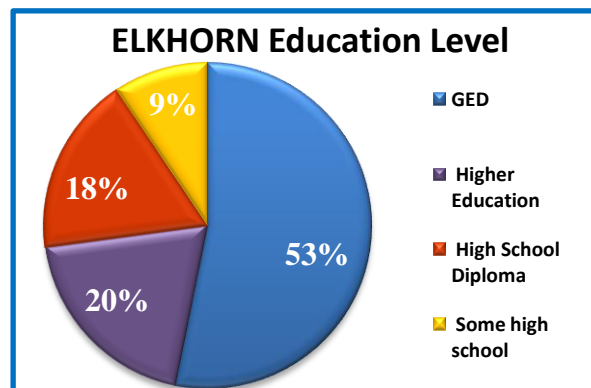
ELKHORN Ethnicity

- White 61%
- NA 30%
- Hispanic (Mexican decent) 4%
- Hispanic (Puerto Rican) 3%
- Black 1%
- Other 1%

The proportion of Native American /American Indian women (29.8%) is significantly greater than men (15.3%) (p.<.05). Of those offenders from both programs (62 total) who identify as Native American/American Indian, 22.7% report a tribal affiliation of Chippewa Cree, 17% are Salish and Kootenai, 13.2% are Blackfeet, 9.4% Crow, 5.7% Gros Ventre 9.5% Sioux/Assiniboine Sioux and 1.9% Little Shell. Moreover, Araphaho, Cherokee, Confederation, Flathead, Fort Belknap, Northern Cheyenne and Turtle Mountain Chippewa cumulatively represent the remaining 15% of the tribal population (see Appendix B for complete breakdown of tribal affiliations).

Education level: With regard to education, 59.5% of all Nexus residents hold a GED certificate, 15.7% are high school graduates, 5.4% have "Technical College" level education, 3.8% have an associate's degree, 1.1% have a master's degree and 1.5% have either vocational training, a tech degree or a bachelor's degree. 13.0% of all male offenders noted no academic achievement. Of the Elkhorn offenders, 53.0% have obtained a GED, 18% have a high school diploma (8.8% have some high school, but have not graduated), 20% have some higher education.

NEXUS Education Level

- GED 63%
- High School Diploma 16%
- No Academic Achievement 7%
- Some Higher Education/Degree 14%
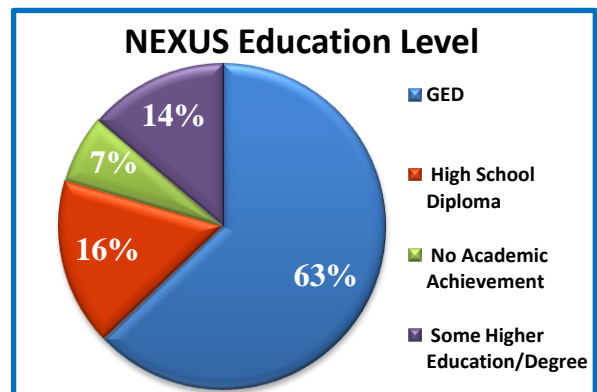
Marital status: 42% of Nexus offenders have never been married, 25% are divorced, 20.5% are married and 12.4% are married via common law statute. 34.7% of Elkhorn residents are divorced, 20.8% are married, 19.4% have never been married, 16.7% are married by common law statute, another 4.2% are separated and 2.8% are cohabitating.

Children: 77% of offenders at the Nexus treatment facility are parents. Of the Nexus

ELKHORN Education Level

- GED 53%
- Higher Education 20%
- High School Diploma 18%
- Some high school 9%

offenders, 50.8% have between one and three children, 15.1% have between four and six children, 0.5% have nine children and 0.5% have twelve children. 33% have no children. 89.5% of the female offenders at the Elkhorn facility have children. On average, they have 2.67 children. 10.5% of the Elkhorn offenders have no children; of those with children, 72.7% have between one and three children, 23.7% have between four and six children and 3.5% have seven children or eight children.

Domestic violence, child abuse and neglect: 13.6% of the male offenders at Nexus were reportedly victims of domestic violence, but only 2.3% report that they have stayed at a domestic

violence shelter. In contrast, 76.4% of the female offenders at Elkhorn report being victims of domestic violence, and 25.5% have stayed in a domestic violence shelter.   38.4% of men from Nexus were physically abused or neglected as a child, and 24.7% indicate that they were sexually abused as a child. Of these, only 11.4% of men and 23.1% of women respectively were placed in the custody of Child Protective Services (CPS) or Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS). 1.4% of men and 20.4% of women spent time in foster care as a child. 60.4% of women from the Elkhorn program report a history of childhood abuse or neglect; no information specifically concerning sexual abuse history was gathered for this study, though anecdotal evidence suggests that the percentage of women sexually abused as children is higher than for men. Of those women reporting abuse, only 23.1% indicate having been in CPS or DCFS custody. Overall, women are twice as likely as men to have been placed in the custody of CPS or DCFS at some point as a child.

Additional family variables: The additional client information proffered by Nexus proved to be very informative. For example,   31% of male offenders report having a diagnosis of ADHD as a child. In addition, 31% of men were raised in Montana. 43% of Nexus offenders have substance-abusing mothers and 61% report having a substance-abusing father. 7.3% report that their mother has been convicted of a drug-related crime and 12.8% report that their father has been convicted of a drug-related crime. Additionally, 24.3% have siblings who are also in the Montana Criminal Justice System.
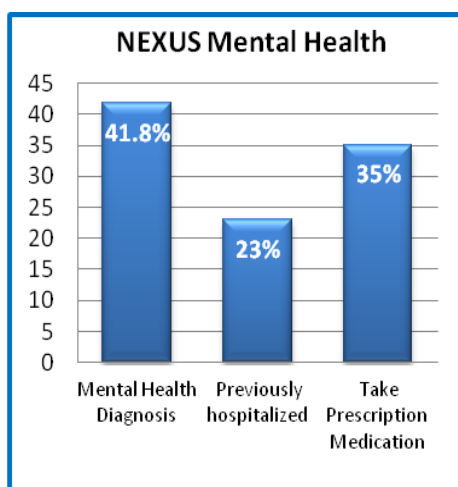
Mental illness: Of the Nexus offenders, 41.8% report having a mental health diagnosis. 23% have been previously hospitalized or placed in a mental health facility, and 35% are taking prescription medication. Of the Elkhorn offenders, 85.6% have a mental health diagnosis,
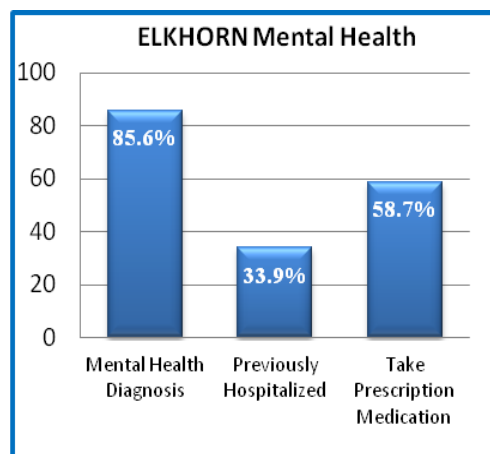
while 33.9% report previous hospitalization or placement in a mental health facility and 58.7% are taking prescription medication. Scores on the Kessler screening instrument indicate that over 42% of the population is positive for mental distress associated with mental illness. This prevalence rate of mental illness is not significantly different than in the first study indicating that the phenomenon is consistent in this population.

Employment: At the time of incarceration, 44.2% of Nexus offenders were reportedly employed full-time, 5.4% were employed part-time, 44.6% were unemployed, 2.2% were on disability and the remaining were not employed. Remaining offenders were either students or self-employed at time of incarceration. Also at the time of incarceration, 33.9% of male offenders reported an annual income level under $10,000, 26.3% made $10,001-$25,000

annually, 17.4% reported an annual income of $25,001-$40,000 and 8% made $40,001-$75,000 annually. One respondent claimed an annual income over $75,001 at time of incarceration.

**NEXUS Annual Income**

(Pie chart legend: Under $10.000, $10.001-$25.000, $25.001-$40.000, $40.001-$75.000, $75.001 and up)

(Chart values: 31%, 20%, 39%, 9%, 1%)

Nexus Employment Status

(Pie chart values: 44%, 5%, 4%, 2%, 45%)

(Legend: Unemployed, Full-time, Part-time, Self Employed, Student, Other, Disability)
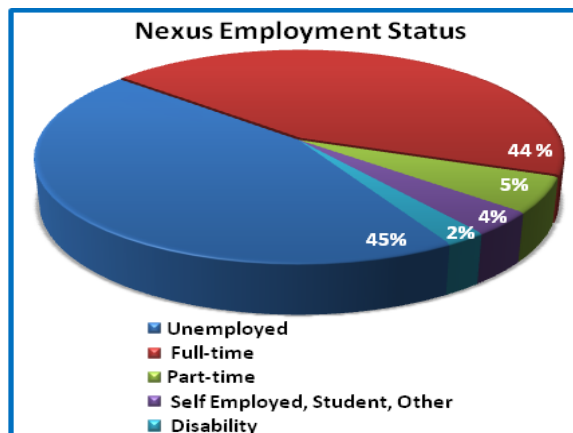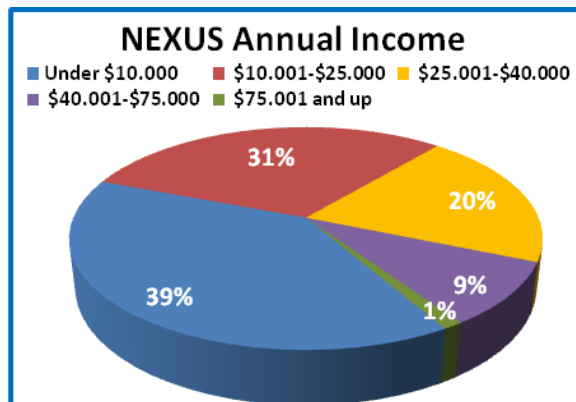
Illegal income: 77.1% of Nexus offenders report previously selling illegal drugs as an income source, 21% report illegally obtaining income via drug manufacture, 21.6% gained illegal income by selling prescription drugs, 25.4% report stealing from their employers as a means of illegal income and 47.1% gained illegal income through stealing from friends and family. 51.4% claim theft of property or burglary as an illegal income source and 29% report illegally obtaining income by issuing bad checks. 44.3% of male offenders claim illegal income obtained through gambling. Other reported illegal sources of income include credit card fraud, shoplifting, using women to make money and "selling myself and others."

Drugs of choice: 44.4% of male offenders report meth as their first drug of choice, 18.2% report alcohol as the first drug of choice and 17.8% report marijuana. The remainder use cocaine or 'other.' Marijuana is listed as second drug of choice for 27.9% of Nexus offenders, meth is reported for 26.6%, alcohol is second for 18% and cocaine is the second drug of choice for 12.2% of men. The remainder use 'other'

NEXUS Drug of Choice

(Bar chart legend: Meth, Alcohol, Marijuana, Other, Cocaine)

(First: Meth 45, Alcohol 18, Marijuana 18, Other 14, Cocaine 5)
(Second: Marijuana 28, Meth 27, Alcohol 18, Other 15, Cocaine 12)
(Third: Other 28, Marijuana 22, Alcohol 21, Cocaine 17, Meth 12)

substances. Third drug of choice is marijuana at 21.8%, alcohol with 20.8% of male offenders and cocaine for 16.8%. Meth still comes in with 12.7% but then hallucinogens and prescriptions rise as a preference, with the remainder of offenders listing 'other'.
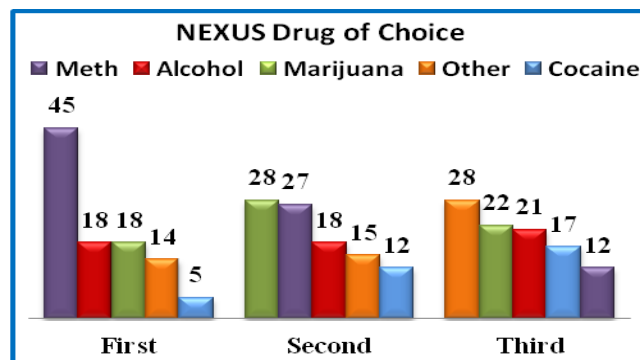
COMPLETION & RETURN TO SERVICE

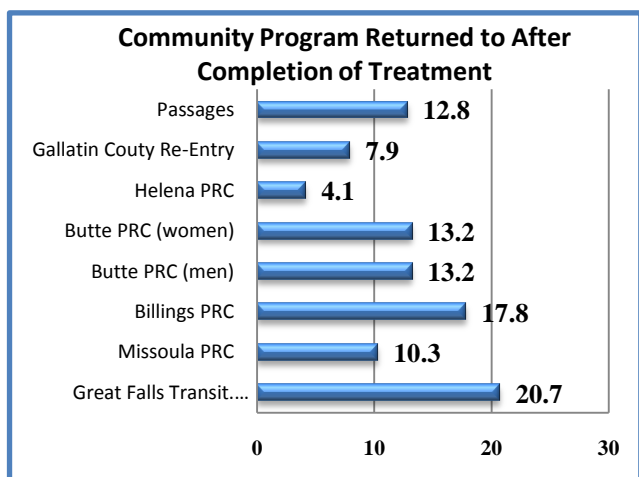This section of the report describes completion rates, return rates, and what predicts success or failure in both treatment and post-treatment programs.

Across both programs, 82% of offenders completed 9 months of treatment; 18% were discharged prior to completing. The early discharges were for disciplinary reasons, leaving against advice, medical reasons or were AWOL. At Nexus, 78.4% of offenders completed the program; this is

an 11% increase over the completion rate from 2008-2009. At Elkhorn, 88.2% of offenders successfully completed the program; the remaining discharges were at the request of staff (including medical, disciplinary and other issues beyond the scope of the program). This is a 6% improvement over last year.   This difference in program completion rate is statistically significant with the women's program seeing more offenders through to completion. Possible reasons for this are explored in the discussion section of the report.

The average length of stay for program completers is 273 days (this is the prescribed 9 months length of the program).   Average length of stay for program non-completers is 123 days; this is on average 24 days longer in retention than in the previous report. For men who do not complete the program, average stay is 109 days (19 days longer than the year before). For women who do not complete the program, average stay is 175 days; this is 32 days longer than the previous year. The difference between the first report and this one regarding the time that non-completers are retained in the programs is statistically significant and indicates that the programs have an increased ability to retain the most difficult clients.

   Program participants post discharge: Nexus and Elkhorn completers were discharged primarily to Community Correction programs. Chart 12 shows the location of where completers went after exiting the program. 47.8% of offenders were released from Nexus and Elkhorn into pre-release centers in 5 different counties. Of those who successfully completed the program

Community Program Returned to After Completion of Treatment

Passages	12.8
Gallatin Couty Re-Entry	7.9
Helena PRC	4.1
Butte PRC (women)	13.2
Butte PRC (men)	13.2
Billings PRC	17.8
Missoula PRC	10.3
Great Falls Transit….	20.7

and were placed in the community 21.5% were still in those programs at the time of this report, 14.5% failed to complete the community program and 64% (155 offenders) had completed this community placement. Of those not still in the programs, 82.6% completed and 17.4% were returned to prison, START, Passages or other correctional facility. Of the 27 offenders who did not complete the program only 1 committed a new crime; the other 26 committed a technical violation of their parole.

Non-Completion and Returns: Predictive Methodology

Preliminary correlations and cross-tabulations explored potential significant relationships between all appropriate and available individual and grouped variables to determine which were related to non-completion. For this report, the term "significant" is used to indicate that statistical testing established (or failed to establish) a relationship or association between variables which, according to the mathematical laws of probability, is not due to mere chance. Following initial examination, both univariate and multivariate methods were employed. Univariate statistical methods examine the relationship between two variables. For example, univariate statistics can address the question: Is having a diagnosis of mental illness associated with non-completion? In this case, we are examining a simple association between one predictor variable (i.e., mental illness/no-mental illness) and one outcome variable (i.e., completion/non-

completion). The two univariate statistics used in this study were chi-square analysis and t-tests. Chi-square analysis is used when exploring relationships or differences between categorical variables, that is, variables that capture information within categories, such as male/female, the presence or absence of a diagnosis, and the presence or absence of a particular crime. T-tests are used to examine differences in the means of a continuous variable, such as days in treatment, age or number of prior felonies, in relation to the grouping variable (completion/non-completion). With a t-test, the mean of the continuous variable (i.e., days in placement) is compared for two groups of meth-offenders (i.e., completers/non-completers; returned to service/not-returned to service) in order to see if there is a significant difference. If there is a difference, then the continuous variable is considered a good candidate for use in a multivariate predictor model. In other words, if there is a significant difference in the average number of felonies prior to placement between completers and non-completers, then conversely, the average number of felonies prior to placement is a good potential candidate for predicting the outcome in the more complex, multivariate model.

The multivariate statistical method used to build predictor models for this study is binary logistic regression. This method assumes a single dichotomous outcome variable, such as completion (1) non-completion (0). Several predictor variables are used simultaneously to determine the likelihood that the outcome variable will occur.   The procedure also determines if the relationship between specific predictor variables and the outcome variable is statistically significant or could have occurred by chance. The advantage of this statistic is that we may look at several predictor variables together, such as mental health diagnosis, age, etc. in order to determine if one or more of these variables is predicting the outcome. This allows the researchers to examine the effect of each variable together with the effects of all other variables in the model, that is, to examine them *all things considered*.

Predicting non-completion

Consistent with findings in the previous report, certain variables together significantly predict this and must be considered risk factors: having a mental illness; having ADHD as part of childhood history (men); age; and having fewer lifetime felonies (See Table 1).

Analyzing both programs together, 73% of the non-completers have mental illness, compared to 54% of those who completed;   51% had a diagnosis of ADHD as a child compared to 27% for those who have completed the program. Somewhat counter-intuitively, but consistent with last year's findings, non-completers have an average of 3.52 lifetime felonies, compared to an average of 4.96 lifetime felonies for offenders who *have* completed the program. These findings present substantial implications for treatment, which are addressed in the discussion section of this report.

Predicting Non-Completion

Significant Risk Factors	Completers		Non-Completers	
	With	Without	**With**	Without
Mental Health Diagnosis	**54.4%**	45.6%	**63.6%**	73.1%
ADHD	**27.1%**	72.9%	**51.4%**	26.9%
Mean Age	**37.6**		**33.5**	
Mean Number of Lifetime Felonies	**4.96**		**3.52**	

Predicting Offender Return Rate

This report has identified the risk factors for methamphetamine treatment program completers who were discharged from the program after completing yet are returned to another DOC program following placement in prerelease or other Community Corrections setting (eg. Great Falls Transition). Successful completers have been out of the program for an average of 498 days. 50% of these had been out longer than 445 days. 21.5% of those are still in prerelease, but 78.5 % of methamphetamine treatment program completer (190) are available for analysis with regards to what occurs after PRC program completion and whether or not they have been returned to service in the Department of Corrections. For nearly all, the first 180+ days were spent in a pre-release or other transitions center.

81.5% of those who were sent from treatment to a community setting completed that program. Of the 18.5% who failed to complete the program, only one had committed any new crime. The rest were returned to various programs within the Department of Corrections for technical violations.

PRC program completers were compared with non-completers across a variety of factors to determine which offender characteristics place them at risk for return to service. A statistical model (binary logistical regression) was constructed to determine which variables predict return.

There was no significant difference between returners and completers with regards to the number of lifetime arrests, misdemeanors, or felonies. Men and women are equally likely to complete. Variables which significantly predicted whether or not an offender would be returned from the prerelease center to another Department of Corrections program are identified in the table below. A significantly lower percentage of Native American offenders were returned relative to non-Natives. In fact, they were returned at rate roughly 1/3 of that of the non-Native American counterparts. Similar to the prerelease center non-completers, younger offenders were at higher risk for return from PRCs and other programs. The other significant predictor in which there's a large visible difference between return and non-returners, is the average number of months spent in prison. Those who were returned had spent an average of six and a half years in prison compared with non-returners who had spent just over four years.

Predicting Offender Return

Significant Risk Factors	Returners	Non- Returners
Native American	**7.3%**	92.7%
Non-Native American	**21.5%**	78.5%
Age	**34.5**	**38.2**
Mean Number months in prison	**78.5**	**49.5**

Predicting recidivism

Technically, recidivism is defined by Association of State Correctional Administrators as "The Rate at which adult offenders return to prison in Montana for any reason within three years of release from prison." For this study, only three of the 299 offenders who were referred to the treatment programs from prison were then returned to prison. One female offender was returned directly from the treatment program to the prison. Two male offenders who progressed as far as the prerelease center were discharged from there to the prison. Within this definition of recidivism there currently are not enough offenders recidivating to predict what places them at risk to do so.

DISCUSSION

Setting up a specific methodology and strategy for collecting research-level program evaluation data reflects a contemporary and advanced professional corrections management strategy. At this point in time DOC is able to track this group of methamphetamine related offenders and link characteristics to risk. The ultimate goal of this study was to establish efficient data collection and reporting methods which would enable improvement of program effectiveness. Using the treatment program completion rate as a yardstick, both programs have significantly improved. Not only do a higher percent of admissions complete the program, but even non-completers are being retained longer, providing a greater chance for success. In the previous study, the programs were advised to develop clinical practice models that take into consideration identified risk factors for non-completion; both have done so.

Prior to referral to the Nexus program the majority of offenders engaged in costly criminal behavior for income. For example, 77% dealt illegal drugs, 21% were manufacturing them, 51% committed theft of property or burglary, 25% stole from employers and another 47% stole from friends and family. Throughout the 9 months of treatment and 6 months of prerelease (and beyond) there was only one new crime.

Elkhorn continues to graduate a higher percentage of offenders than Nexus, though once in prerelease, rate of completion is not significantly different. In general, the courts have traditionally afforded women more treatment opportunities prior to commitment/incarceration than men and their receptivity to treatment interventions may be heightened by a cumulative effect. Men do have significantly more arrests, misdemeanor, and felony convictions than women and the implications of childhood trauma in relation to gender remain unclear. The most

consistent factor revealed in the data concerning non-completion is the presence of a mental health diagnosis. Psychiatric hospitalization and medication have receded as predictors indicating that steps taken since the last report to manage offenders with this history have been successful. In many cases, it is likely that the severity of the mental illness is under-diagnosed prior to treatment referral, and manifests itself severely only after admission; this may compromise the offender's ability to comply with program participation.

Counter-intuitively, program non-completers have less felony convictions than those who complete. This finding was unchanged across study periods and indicates that programs should be looking at those with fewer offenses as being at higher risk. One idea suggested by this finding is that those with more felonies have more to lose by failing to complete; they may be facing a more severe prison-time sanction if they fail. They are significantly older (37 on average compared to 33), an age trend that continues as we look at return (or failure) rates for prerelease where the successful are 38 years old on average, compared to 34. Also of consideration for this discussion is that in addition to being younger, prerelease center returnees have spent more time in prison than those who finish. This presents a profile of younger offenders with longer incarceration histories, despite having fewer felonies. It is possible this less successful group of offenders is more adapted to an institutional setting and needs additional treatment strategies geared towards primary socialization in the community.

It is reasonable to assume that, in addition to gender and treatment setting, other factors will continue to vary across this diverse and complex population, not all of which will have a quantifiable impact on completion. In studying any treatment population there are always intangible factors and the best source of information for further exploring completion rates and return rates is the subjective knowledge base of the clinical directors and frontline practitioners of the treatment programs themselves. Future studies should include qualitative narrative interviewing and analysis as an evaluation methodology.

The Native American return rate from prerelease centers is in stark contrast to the previous report on the prerelease centers published by Conley and Schantz (2006). Further analysis by program (gender) sustained this finding – a surprisingly high percentage of Native Americans graduate prerelease relative to other ethnicities. Since the publication of the 2006 report, there has been a heightened awareness across Department of Correction administration and community corrections leadership of the role that ethnicity may play at key decision points in an offender's history. DOC engaged in a successful attempt to secure additional resources for responding to chemically dependent Native American offenders; even though these resources were pending during the course of this study, their anticipated contribution to the adjudication of technical violations at the prerelease center and community probation level may have had an impact.

The previous study of these programs indicated that a common rule of thumb in evaluating new programming is to allow a period of three years to transpire before rigorous evaluation is conducted. This evaluator continues to recommend ongoing further data analysis that may track progress of treatment recipients in the community over time.

For the Nexus and Elkhorn programs the data collection systems remain in place. Ensuring accurate data collection beyond program exit is crucial for the development of fiscally and

politically satisfactory answers to key questions. Without this continued data it will not be possible to look at recidivism or success rates meaningfully. Fortunately for Montana, the DOC remains committed to the inclusion of effective data tracking methods.

Appendix: Complete Breakdown on Tribal Affiliation

Tribal Affiliation	Percent (%)
Chippewa Cree	17
Blackfeet	13.2
Salish & Kootenai	13.2
Crow	9.4
Gros Ventre	5.7
Sioux	5.7
Assiniboine/Sioux	3.8
Cree	3.8
N. Cheyenne	3.8
Arapaho	1.9
Cherokee	1.9
Chippewa	1.9
Confederate	1.9
Crow/Cheyenne	1.9
Flathead	1.9
Fort Belknap	1.9
Kootenai	1.9
Little Shell	1.9
Other	1.9
Salish	1.9
Turtle Mountain Chippewa	1.9

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